

# The Relationship between Society Life Pattern and Space Utilization in Islamic Historical Area of Surabaya

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## ABSTRACT

Based on the historical growth of Surabaya City, there are a number of marked areas, one of which is Ampel historical area. The Ampel historical area has a specific characteristic, both physically and non-physically, which is visible from its heritage of a mosque site and religious activities. A study conducted through a phenomenological approach to develop spatial value that was characterized from socio-behavioral pattern. Explorative, qualitative and inductive methods were used to analyze social interaction, ethnic characteristics, thought and beliefs, and spatiality. The Islamic historical area community is composed of various ethnic groups who have hereditarily lived in and inhabited the area. Each ethnic group carries its own unique pattern of behavior, customs and habits that differ from group to group. However, their common belief, the Islam religion, has created a connection among the different ethnic behavior patterns. The behavioral connection may take a physical form, that is the utilization of space for activities, or a non-physical one, that is a psychological bond manifested in the agreement for co-existence. Their common background of living in the historical area and spending their life there has formed a composite behavioral pattern of the entire historical area people. The composite behavior is reflected in the utilization of space which in the long run has resulted in a united spatial pattern. The relation between the community's pattern of life and spatial pattern brings about a concept of togetherness that may be used for the basis of developing the whole community of Islamic historical area in Surabaya City.

**KEY WORDS:** Ethnic Varieties, Pattern of Life, Space Utilization.

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## 1- INTRODUCTION

Research on societies is becoming more and more important due to the increasing number of developmental problems which are pulled out of the societies' roots [1]. Societies are the embryo of development since development aims at improving the welfare of the societies. Discussion on a society is inseparable from what the members do in their daily life, i.e. their basic and daily activities as well as their behaviour related to their cultural background [2]. The cultural characteristics of an ethnic group are reflected on the origin or ethnic qualities that it inherently carries. Every ethnic group possesses specific characteristics which have both similarities and differences among them[3]. The problem arising within a society is how to co-exist in spite of the diversified natures of all the ethnic groups. Even more fundamental than that is how to develop an area with heterogeneous conditions [4]. A study question to put forward is what the meeting point of the heterogeneous conditions is that may be used as the basic concept for areal development. The Ampel historical area in Surabaya is a case worth studying since it has diverted ethnic groups that have proven to be capable of co-existing through several periods of time [3]. The purpose of the study was to prove that the relationship between society life pattern and space utilization expressing the structure of the area. The composite behavior is reflected in the utilization of space which in the long run has resulted in a united spatial pattern [5]. The relation between the community's pattern of life and spatial pattern brings about a concept of togetherness that may be used for the basis of developing the whole community of Islamic historical area in Surabaya City. The spatial pattern contains the value of the space which are connected as a chain. The development of those areas should not pull out one of those chains[6].

## METHODS

The method used in the study was explorative-quantitative-inductive under the umbrella of phenomenological paradigm [7], in order to unearth and record the phenomena developing in the selected locus. This was based on the rationale that the pieces of information disclosed were values which were immeasurable in figures, and the events recorded were phenomena developing in the society.

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The observation unit was in the Historical Islamic community area of the center city of Surabaya where individuals existed in communities of different ethnicities living in a unity of activities. The selection of information units was based on the sources of information which derived from three elements, namely humans of ethnic, pattern of life and activities, and space utilization[8]. The interconnection among the three elements formed several units of information which were used as the basis of analysis. A unit of information was a set of activities conducted by people or a society in a given place and space having the same characteristic. All of the collected information using naturalistic method ,based on grounded research (field observation)[9].

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Ethnic Diversity :** Each of the ethnic groups in Ampel Islamic historical area has its own motivation to live in these area. It remains up to the present and has underpinned all the activities and interactions amongst the inhabitants. Those are : (i) **Arabic Ethnics:**The arrival of the Arabic ethnics in the area was initiated by Sunan Ampel (*an Arabic descendant*) for Islamic teaching and trade purposes. The growth of this ethnic group is supported by religious interests and philosophy of life, that is to live in an area of religious value. The strengths of the ethnic Arabs which have supported them to live in the area are the hereditary family tie, the existence of Ampel historical area Mosque, and the belief that the land of Ampel historical area is beneficial to their worldly and afterworld life. The ideas appeared during an interview with several inhabitants as summarized below: *“We like living here because we want to get the blessings of Sunan Ampel because we are close to Ampel historical area Mosque, and this place is safe and secure to live in.”* (Interview in March, 2000) , (ii) **Madurese Ethnics:** The reason behind the coming of Madurese people to the area was mainly the attraction of Islam. The Madurese are generally very religious and tend to be fanatics. The Ampel historical area mosque is regarded as a charismatic center of Islam propagation, observation of religious duties, and religious visits before people go to Mecca and Madinah. Some Madurese traders stated: *“Praying for safety in the world and afterworld or for other things is better if performed in the mosque or at the grave of a “Wali” (great religious leader) and it is more likely to be granted sooner.”* Moreover,*“The land in Ampel historical area is very good for business because it is close to the grave of Sunan Ampel historical area, so we can get his blessings.”* (Interview in March, 2001), and (iii) **Javanese Ethnics:** The Javanese ethnics living in this area are descendants of the native inhabitants during the life of Sunan Ampel historical area. The desire of the ethnic Javanese to live in the area was mainly driven by the charisma of Sunan Ampel historical area and Islam teachings, the cooperative nature of people’s activities, and the principle of life based on Islamic brotherhood. They can feel the security and tranquility of living in this area, a condition that they cannot find anywhere else. The following are some of their statements: *“We will take care of and maintain our birthplace which we have inherited from our ancestors. Since this dwelling is close to the grave of Sunan Ampel historical area, we will get his blessings, and besides, this area is always peaceful and safe.”* (Interview in March, 2001)

**Table 1 Motivation of ethnic groups to live in Ampel historical area**

Ethnic	Background	Motivation
Arabic	Religion propagation and trade	Existence of Ampel historical area Mosque, religious activities in area resembling Mecca, area utility, Islamic center of business
Madurese	Religion and trade attraction	Existence of Ampel historical area Mosque, religious activities, brotherhood ties, inner peace, ease of livelihood.
Javanese	Hereditary and religious	Existence of Ampel historical area Mosque, hereditary brotherhood, high cooperativeness, relative safety and peace.
<b>Others</b>	<b>Trade and location</b>	<b>Good growth of business, easy accessibility locally and regionally, peace among ethnic groups.</b>

Source: Summary of Study, 2000 (Source: Ampel historical area Village Administration, RT, RW, 2001)

**Pattern of Life :** The varied ethnic cultures carry different patterns of nature and character. The continuous togetherness and mutual relationship result in a pattern of interrelation and unity. The togetherness is determined by their common belief, experience of living in the same area, conditions and thoughts as well as interdependency. A gap sometimes arises among groups of young Arabs and Madurese mainly because of the difference in economic status and temperaments. Nonetheless, harmony is always fostered through religious activities. Belief in the concept of Islam has been deeply rooted in that they apply the principal of equality of all humans before Allah SWT (source: field observation, 2001).

**Ethnic Interaction:** The Arabic ethnics’ culture is closely related to Islam norms and laws. This is manifested in a particular privacy level of the women, the group’s codes of interaction and daily conducts such as the style of dressing, eating, as well as their dialect, association and marriage. Such qualities were mentioned by some Javanese and Madurese youths of the local youth organization as follows: *“The Arabs are generally of good nature, but sometimes they tend to be self-righteous and favor their own group so that other citizens feel ignored.*

Their way of communicating is also typical in that they tend to speak fast in a tone so high that the nearby neighbors feel annoyed.” (Interview in March, 2001). The behavioral characteristic of the Arabic ethnics is the strong, closed family tie. It is not easy for other ethnic groups to establish a family relationship with them unless they have closely associated with them in their daily life. Association with outsiders may be established through a well-known mediator. In addition, the male Arab descendants are more dominant than the female ones as seen in their domination of business activities. The nature of the Arabic ethnics in Ampel historical area develops from their strong economic position and offensive, arrogant character.

The Madurese ethnics have a specific culture marked, among others, by their practical and pragmatic way of life. Their offensive and slightly rough temperament develops from their inborn character and hardships of life away from their native land. According to some ethnic Javanese youths of the local youth organization, the nature and behavior of the Madurese ethnics are as follows: “Most of them are poorly educated and easily irritated. When slightly irritated, they get outraged easily. The Madurese youths often take a short-cut without sound consideration.”. On the other hand : “The Madurese have a good nature, like to help others and are responsive to the condition of their neighbors of different ethnicity. They highly respect one’s rights and responsibilities and have a firm standpoint. This sometimes results in self-righteousness and difficulty to accept directions.” (Interview in April, 2001). All their activities are directed toward meeting their economic needs. The positive things carried by this ethnic group are their strong drive for work, perseverance and principle of equality among humans. The other good character is that they will respect others who respect them, so they like doing anything with other ethnics.

The Javanese ethnics carry typical Javanese culture. Having hereditary background, the Javanese ethnics possess a higher level of tolerance. Due to their tendency to be tolerant and avoid tension, notable conflicts involving them rarely happen. Mixture of the Javanese ethnics with others in Ample historical area has been going on for as long as their history. Therefore, they can adapt to the other ethnic circles more easily. A Javanese ethnic working as a teacher stated: “We have lived in Ample historical area for a long time, so we don’t feel strange to other ethnics. Though the Arabs and Madurese sometimes look rude, they are basically kind. Our ancestors have inherited a principle of mutual respect and unity in this area, so there is no reason to leave.” (Interview in April, 2001)

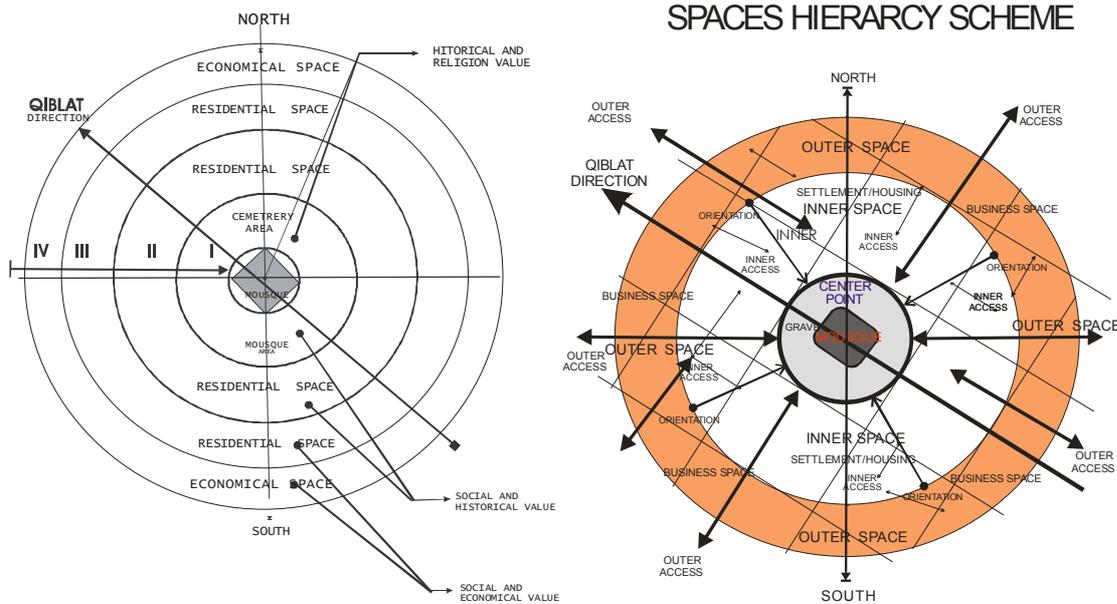
Summarizing the discussion of each of the ethnic groups’ nature and character, a schema of ethnic natures and characteristics showing similarities and differences can be obtained. In terms of social relationship, there appears to be some differences of nature and character among ethnic groups. Never the less, such differences can be dissolved through common motivation and intention into unity of belief [10]. The integration is not meant to change individual characters but to be an effort of the society to find togetherness. Within the behavioral differences, there is a similarity, that is a common tie or control – religion. The different customs and inborn qualities turn to be complementary to each other. The activities done are: (i) developing tolerance, (ii) adapting the different natures and characters to a common belief, and (iii) establishing interrelation of economic needs [11].

The pattern or behavior and character developing from ethnic behavior and characteristics of societal culture are described in a brief schema in Figure 1 and Table 2. The societal nature and behavior within their life background are a summary of what was caught in the field (not normative) because if the ethnic groups are separated in different areas, they will develop different natures and characters though the normative standards are always carried along.

**Table 2 : Ethnic Pattern of Behavior and Character** (Behavior and believe Pattern Superimpose)

<b>Ring 1</b> <i>Needs and Demands Interrelation</i>	<b>Ring2</b> <i>Circle of Inter-ethnic Tolerance</i>	<b>Ring 3</b> <i>Circle of Philosophical Similarity(Core)</i>	<b>Ring 4</b> <i>Diversity of ethnicities/cultures/patterns of behavior</i>
<b>Economic Needs Interrelation and Social Demands Interrelation</b>	<b>High Performance, Pragmatic Calm:Offensive Persevering Tolerant(javanese),Arrogant, Emotional Evasive(Arabic),and Strong, Practical Flexible(Maduranese)</b>	<b>Society Life under the Same Philosophy(religion)</b>	<b>Diversity of ethnicities/cultures/patterns of behavior</b>

Essentially, a pattern of togetherness, interrelation based on common needs, and high inter-ethnic tolerance have developed in the society. This condition results from the feeling of security, peace and welfare that they have enjoyed from generation to generation. It is also the result of a common feeling and belief, that is their closeness to the late Sunan Ampel historical area[12].



**Figure 1: The pattern developing from ethnic behavior and characteristics of societal culture**

**Note:** The spatial pattern of the whole Ampel historical area, area has a center point (center space) which houses the mosque and grave sites functioning as the orientation of the entire space, the spatial hierarchy consists of 3 (three) parts, namely the center, middle and fringe areas, and the resulting characteristics are a synergy among the developed environment, society's activities, nature of activities, and space utilization.

**Pattern of People' Activities :** The religious life of the society has developed and flourished since the arrival of the late Sunan Ampel historical area in this area. Nowadays the religious life is still visible in the religious services and religious visits. The mosque is the center of religious services and activities for the local community as well as outsiders. The activities are carried out not only inside the mosque but also in the porch and sometimes even in the yard. The visits are mostly done in the grave area. There are more or less 100 graves but the main ones are the graves of Sunan Ampel historical area and his close relatives (*Takmir* of Ampel historical area Mosque, 2001). During the visits, the visitors pray in front of the graves in their own ways according to their beliefs. This activity is done any time, without time limit. The social life in Ampel historical area develops from a mixture of different ethnic groups. The social life is inseparable from the religious and economic life in Ampel historical area. Visibly there are several ethnic groups in the area but they are not physically separated from each other, for example by fences or walls. The Madurese ethnic group live in the northern part of the area, the Arabs in the south, and the Javanese in the middle. However, there are sporadic dwellings of other ethnics within a given ethnic area. Harmony among ethnics has been going on for a long time and has never experienced any significant conflicts. The head of a neighborhood group (RT 04, RW02) said: “*Tribal differences are nothing new to the citizens of Ampel historical area. My nextdoor neighbor is a Banjarese descendant, the seller in front of my house is an Arab, and there is a shop belonging to a Madurese in front. The harmony of the people in managing ethnic differences comes from the influence of religion on people's behavior and has been going on from generation to generation.*” (Interview in February, 2001).

Another form of social life within this multi-ethnic community is reflected on the activities of mutual help among citizens, both social (helping others experiencing sorrow or difficulty) and commercial ones (becoming house maids or assistants in business). What makes it unique is that all needs for helpers are always met by taking local residents, not outsiders. This is highlighted by the statements of some citizens of Arabic, Madurese and Javanese ethnics as follows: “*We feel suited to living in Ampel historical area area because of the high solidarity, family spirit, and cooperativeness especially at weddings and funerals.*” (Interview in March, 2000). The different ethnics are united in harmony by a common religious tie. Everything related to social activities is always associated with religious norms. The people are reluctant to pay the land and building ownership tax because they prefer to donate some money or give alms through community or religious leaders though the charity is then used for environmental improvements[13].

**Economic Life:**The trade activities started from a traditional market embryo called “sheep market” which originally was a place for trading sheep for religious sacrifice. Then it developed into a place for traders to meet and perform transactions for various goods (brokery). Currently, the major economic activity in Ampel historical area is the trading of religion-related articles. The other forms of trade involve primary and secondary goods for daily needs. The religious goods business is concentrated in the area around the mosque and along

Ampel historical area Suci Street. In this area, many kinds of articles associated with religious services are sold, such as praying mats, caps, and clothes for Moslem men and women. There are also religious books, beads, Arabic perfume, and typical Arabic foods (dates, nuts, honey, shortening, rice boiled with chick-peas, green-pea curry, ‘Maryam bread’, pancakes filled with onions and pieces of meat, and others). Several youths expressed the typical situation as follows: *“Shopping for food in Ampel historical area is unforgettable because in this area, especially in the evening, there are so many hawkers selling various kinds of delicious dishes along KH Mansyur Street.”* (Interview in November, 1999)

Primary or staple goods business is located in the fringe area and deals with rice and other primary goods. A pretty big market is located in Pegirian and provides the daily needs for Ampel historical area residents. Secondary goods are sold in stalls and kiosks located inside the residential areas and along the alleys all over Ampel historical area. Inter-citizen trading marks the informal business activities. The secondary goods sold include clothes, kitchen utensils, school equipment, food, snacks, drinks and others. Most of the economic activities are in trade and services, both formal and informal. Those who are interested in the formal sector such as becoming government and private employees are few[11]. The pattern of the Ampel historical area people’s livelihood based on their daily activities, belief, and environment is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Digrammatic schema of Ampel historical area’s spatial character**

Religious characteristic	Historical characteristic	Socio-cultural characteristic	Economic characteristic
- center of orientation (mosque)	- mosque and grave site as	- dense, friendly	- efficiency of space utilization
- concentric	symbol (area point of interest)	- interrelationship	- multi-function activities
- center of religious services (religious)	- Old nuance	- internal: high privacy	- flexible access from all directions
- existence of sacred place	- conservation area characteristic	- external: open	- flexibility of space utilization
- having spatial values hierarchy		- mixed diversity	- grade pattern facilitates access
- strong directional orientation to the Kaaba		- grid nuance supports friendliness	
- Religion propagation nuance			

**Space Utilization;** The pattern of spatial social relation among ethnic groups develops from the pattern of activities and ethnic characteristics. In general the cultural and ethnic assimilation has run perfectly through a process of mutual influence and understanding[14]. The sense of togetherness is reflected on the uniform residential pattern (linear – grid) facing the Kaaba, so the houses can be used for group praying on certain occasions. The space outside a house is used as a place for socializing and doing daily household activities, business, and connecting one with another.

The dwellings of the Arabic ethnics look more closed, some even have tall fences. This is because of the need for higher privacy for the women and the ethnics’ withdrawn nature. However, they are generally accepted by both the Javanese and Madurese ethnics since they are willing to mix with them and adapt to the local culture. The native Madurese culture brought by this ethnic group to Ampel Islamic historical area is the high family spirit and common activities. This manifests in the common use of space for business (production, sales, and storing) and household facilities (cooking, washing, drying, children’s play ground, and inter-neighbor socializing). This pattern of life affects the cleanliness of homes and surroundings. The relatively small space which is used for both a home and business place is not an obstacle to them since they like sharing facilities. The Javanese ethnics shows on outside space is apparently left more open and modest. It is mostly used as a common space for socializing, and some is used as a household facility (drying up clothes, keeping two-wheeled vehicles). Their business activities rarely make use of the space outside. The inter-ethnic housing tie is shown in the form of : (i) continuous, inter-connected alleys, (ii) use of alleys as a common facility, (iii) use of alleys as a guide for determining direction when performing prayers together, (iv) alleys that run toward the mosque as the center. This physical appearance helps build good sense of togetherness and interrelationship based on common belief [15].

**Spatial Pattern Of Ampel Islamic Historical Area.**

The development and growth of the area follow two specific spatial patterns. The spatial patterns are growing pattern and permanent pattern. The permanent pattern is formed by the embryo of grave and mosque sites resulting in a concentric spatial pattern with the mosque as the center. The growing pattern develops from the growth of inhabitants and housing resulting in a grid pattern orientating toward the Kaaba. This grid pattern remains from time to time and grows outward from the center to the area’s boundaries:(i) **Central Area (Religious and Historical)**, the mosque has a central meaning in that it is the center of orientation of all activities and forms a sacred space. In addition to being a center, it functions as a receptacle that can be accessed from different directions, giving the area a strong sense of concentricity. This is supported by the existence of access roads from areas outside to the mosque which are also used as centers of business for Islamic articles. Therefore, the spatial nature of the central area is religious and historical, (ii) **Middle Area (Socio-cultural)**,the

pattern of roads which is one-directional (toward the Kaaba) results in an Islamic spatial atmosphere (resembling rows of Moslems performing prayers). This gives an image of denseness, friendliness among all people, and absence of social gaps. There are highly intensive inter-ethnic interactions in terms of family spirit, togetherness, and religious services. This is apparent from the activities that hardly ever end and the space utilization in the housing areas which is mostly multi-purpose in nature, giving a spatial atmosphere of social nuances, (iii) **Fringe Area (Economic)**, in terms of location and scale, the economic activities in Ampel historical area may be divided into 3 (three) types. (i) Small-scale activities are located on alley sides and run by families; the things retailed include staple goods and other secondary goods, and the alleys are of 1-2 meters wide. (ii) Medium-scale activities are located in the main road (Ampel historical area Suci Road) which is 2-4 meters wide, and the businesses involve religious articles such as books, clothes, textile, and praying equipment; food, groceries, perfume, food stalls and restaurants. The goods are sold retail, whole-sale, and some are even exported. The main characteristic of this type of activities is its Arabic nuance, even the atmosphere of "Pasar Seng" (a popular marketplace for Indonesian pilgrims to Mecca) is there. (iii) Large-scale activities take place in the streets surrounding Ampel historical area with various businesses, from trade (shops, kiosks, stalls, markets), services (Internet stalls, telecommunication stalls, post office, travel agents, ect.), education (schools, Islamic schools/training centers, courses, etc.) to social facilities (hospitals, health centers, offices, etc.) and recreation facilities (hotels, restaurants). The space is full of businesses and therefore, it has an economic nature and value. All activities are meaningful and hierarchical, develop within a spatiality with specific characteristics[16]. The spatial characters associated with meaning and function of the area are shown in Table 3

## Conclusion

The society plays an important role in extracting information. Several findings have depicted some local patterns emerging from the society's roots. The cultural and ethnic diversities do not result in frictions, on the contrary, they develop patterns of integration and togetherness based on the similarity of life philosophy, high sense of tolerance, and interdependency of physical and spiritual needs. There are 6 (six) local patterns and concepts that have been discovered: (i) society's pattern of livelihood, (ii) pattern of inter-ethnic social interactions, (iii) pattern of ethnic behaviours and nature, (iv) pattern of togetherness within the society, (v) pattern of thoughts and belief, and (vi) spatial pattern.

The practical knowledge which can be utilized comprises: (i) effective individual and group utilization of space, (ii) self-supporting efforts for environmental management, (iii) self-supporting efforts for economic improvement (making use of local potentials), and (iv) principles of tolerance, adaptation, and togetherness. The fundamental enrichment of pragmatic knowledge in this study includes: (i) knowledge of the spirit and motivation for social togetherness, and (ii) knowledge of self-supporting environment conservation, both physically and non-physically.

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